Conservation of World Heritage Sites

2659. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UNESCO has expressed concern over conservation of the World Heritage Sites (WHS) in the country;

(b) if so, whether UNESCO has called for greater ASI role in maintenance of WHS;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the ASI in this regard;

(d) whether any team of UNESCO has visited the country recently to inspect the WHS;

(e) if so, the details of the report submitted by the said team; and

(f) the steps taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise

(d) to (f) Yes, Sir. As a follow-up action to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in its 28th session held in Suzhou, China, a two-member UNESCO mission visited Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya under the control of Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee, in connection with finalization of the site management plan prepared by HUDCO, on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism. The Mission has recommended that the work on Site Management Plan may be suspended until such time all necessary conditions for implementation of the same are in place; namely appropriate legal framework, controls in the buffer zone, management mechanism, etc. The Mission also recommended to explore the possibility of a long term extension of the Mahabodhi Temple Complex inscription to include the cultural landscape identified with Lord Buddha and other properties associated with the life of Buddha in India like Sarnath.

Bodhgaya Temple is not a Centrally protected monument. It is managed and maintained by the Government of Bihar through the

Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee constituted under Bodhgaya Temple Act, 1949.

Another UNESCO Mission visited Hampi in the first week of August, 2005 in connection with preparation of Site management plan for Hampi. The recommendations of the Mission is yet to be received. The Mission held discussions with ASI, Government of Karnataka and other stake holders and recommended early finalisation of Management Plan and operationalisation of the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority, which is a statutory Authority under the Government of Karnataka. The preparation of the operational Site Management Plan is underway.

Survey for restoration of manuscripts

2660. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are conducting any survey to conserve and restore manuscripts;

(b) if so, whether Government had set up any committee for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details of such survey taking place in States/UTs;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Government are facing problem in tracking down experienced practitioners of traditional conservation methods who live in far-flung areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether it is also a fact that Government are taking preservation feedback from the traditional Sri Lankan experts;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) the expenditure incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) National Mission for Manuscripts set up by Government in Feb. 2003 is taking up survey of manuscripts.